



**MONROE COUNTY
ADMINISTRATION DEPARTMENT
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Climate Change Task Force

Regular Monthly Meeting
Wednesday, September 7th 2022, 9-11am
Monroe County Board Assembly Room / Virtual

This meeting was posted in compliance with open meeting laws.

MEETING MINUTES:

1. Call to Order – Tina Osterberg began the meeting at 9:08 a.m.
 2. Welcome & Introductions – Attendance list attached
 3. Updates/Presentations: *Presentations can be found on the Climate Change Task Force Committee webpage, under the 2022 meetings tab at the bottom of the page:*
<https://www.co.monroe.wi.us/government/county-board-of-supervisors/boards-committees/climate-change-task-force>
- **Iowa Flood Center (IFC) & the Iowa Watershed Approach Tour** – B. Micheel, T. Osterberg, J. Tessman, C. Koperski, R. Anderson and G. Pomplun recapped the CCTF IFC fieldtrip that took place at the end of June 2022.
 - General consensus among participants that Iowa’s weather station infrastructure was impressive and inspirational.
 - B. Micheel noted if another field trip is planned, efforts should be made to include decision makers in the trip who have influence on channeling monies to Monroe County’s flood monitoring efforts.
 - B. Micheel identified the importance of duplicating IFC’s structure of assigning dedicated staff to weather station infrastructure and data collection. The distinction between data collection versus data management was highlighted as an area that Monroe County will need to address in the near future.
 - *To read Gillian Pomplun’s article on the IFC field trip in SWNews4U, follow this link:* <https://www.swnews4u.com/local/public-safety/iowa-flood-center-takes-proactive-approach-building-flood-resilience/>
 - **Open Space Properties -**
 - A. Elliott gave background that 8 residential properties were acquired and the structures were demolished in 2021 through a voluntary buyout program funded by FEMA, WEM, WI DNR, and Couleecap. The project is still awaiting final inspection and closeout by FEMA.

- The County has received letters from other municipalities expressing interest in the ownership and management of the properties. The Zoning Committee sent out letters to update the townships involved on the status of the specific properties and also included associated deed restrictions that outline restricted use of the properties.
 - R. Anderson, County Land Use Planner, will be working with each township to develop land management plans.
 - A. Elliott will be approaching the Natural Resource and Extension Committee this month to propose looking into installing a canoe/kayak landing at 17476 Icarus Rd. This property was one of the flood damaged properties Monroe County acquired and demolished in 2021. The Sanitation & Zoning Committee feels it is in a good location for this type of facility to be installed to serve the public.
 - A time extension was requested and approved for the WI DNR Municipal Flood Control grants to allow for determination of ownership and management of properties before closing out grant project. The project period was extended to November 2023.
- **Flood Monitoring Stations** – R. Anderson gave presentation on Monroe County's progress installing grant-funded flood monitoring stations
 - 22 monitoring stations were purchased using approximately \$88,700 in funding from the FEMA Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) and WI Dept. of Health Services Environmental Health Capacity grants and a \$10,000 local match from the donation funds maintained by Kickapoo Valley Association. The stations were received in late May.
 - 11 new stations have been installed, 6 in the Little La Crosse River watershed and 5 in the Upper Kickapoo River watershed. There are 11 stations left to be installed.
 - 2 of the new stations were installed at the Tri-Creek Dam.
 - 1 station will be installed within the Baraboo River watershed near Kendall.
 - R. Anderson presented the online dashboard that displays each flood monitoring station which displays specific data tracked by each station including: time-stamped photos taken with the station's camera, recorded water levels, water temperature, barometric pressure, and each station's battery life/signal readings. The site has user accounts with access permission to this dashboard and is not open to the public at this time.
 - R. Anderson is working with the National Weather Service to register stations on the Advanced Hydrologic Prediction Service and share data collected by the flood monitoring stations. The 'Southwest Wisconsin Hydrology Monitor' page is a work in progress, developed by the National Weather Service and is currently available to the public. **[Link here - https://www.weather.gov/arx/swwi_hydro_monitor](https://www.weather.gov/arx/swwi_hydro_monitor)**
 - R. Anderson announced the Department of Health Services grant also funded the purchase of two flashing beacon warning poles which will be installed to provide a community flood warning system for Amish Communities in Brush Creek area. The 13' warning poles will be configured with 2 flashing beacon lights, solar power, and cellular modem.

The warning poles will be triggered remotely when flood warning alerts are received from National Weather Service and/or the County's flood monitoring stations. The poles will be installed with the help of the County Highway department.

[Click the link to read more about the beacon warning poles - https://www.tapconet.com/product/high-water-warning-system](https://www.tapconet.com/product/high-water-warning-system)

- **Grants and Federal Funding Opportunities** –
 - FEMA BRIC grant is fully expended, R. Anderson requested to shorten the project period to October of 2023 in order to receive the 10% reimbursement that is being held by FEMA until the grant is completed.
 - Department of Health Services grant (Environmental Health Capacity grant) is also fully expended, R. Anderson submitted the reimbursement forms and will hopefully have the reimbursement by the end of the year. Final reports are due in October.
 - Fisher and Farmers grant is fully expended, final reports are due by the end of the year.
 - FEMA Hazard mitigation planning grant was used to fund the 2022 stream crossing inventory summer interns. Some funding is left and will need to be used before the project period ends October of 2023.
 - N. Krause (NRCS) commented on the result of the recent Inflation Reduction Act allocating \$20 billion nationwide to existing NRCS programs. While the amount of funding coming to Wisconsin specifically is still unknown, it is likely the increase in funding for conservation programs will take affect beginning the fiscal year of 2023.

- **Silvopasture Project** – T. Gretebeck discussed the recent tree planting project on his dairy farm for carbon sequestering efforts and general sustainability of his beloved property.
 - T. Gretebeck discussed a tree planting project on his property that occurred over the spring with the help of the County Land Conservation Department, Wisconsin Land and Water, The Nature Conservancy, Organic Valley, Savanna Institute, and willing members of the community. Black walnut and honey locust trees were the hardwoods chosen to plant due to their ability to diffuse light (which does not infringe on the grass' growth - which is important for a grass-fed dairy operation).
 - T. Gretebeck discussed that although the tree planting project has been a dream of his for years, it was not able to be executed without the funding help of the organizations involved. He mentioned most farms cannot afford to take on a task like this and need assistance.
 - B. Micheel presented a draft flyer created by Wisconsin Land and Water Association about 'Reducing Emissions through Conservation' that touches on Tucker's efforts. The final draft will be released soon and will be linked on the Climate Change Task Force section of the County LCD website at that time.
 - ***To read Savanna Institute's article on the event and watch a short clip of the tree planting, click this link:***
<https://www.savannainstitute.org/perennialaf-how-to-plant-a-silvopasture-with-all-seasons-farm/>

- **Village of Norwalk – Emergency Action Plan** – B. Micheel discussed the county is working with Thriving Earth (science-based organization) to develop an emergency action plan regarding the dam that is located above the village of Norwalk.
 - B. Micheel discussed the EAP will dictate appropriate rendezvous points in the case of flood events. The flood monitoring stations the county is working to install will also assist with flood warning alerts.

- **New Position – Agronomist** – B. Micheel presented that it was decided during August’s Natural Resource and Extension meeting that the county will create a county Agronomist position instead of signing on for a shared position between 4 counties as a Regional Agricultural Agent’ approach UW-Extension is implementing.

- **Presentation – The Monroe County Stream Assessment** – H. Wehrs (2022 summer intern) presented results of 2022 stream crossing assessment. *Presentation available on the Climate Change tab of the Monroe County LCD website: <https://www.co.monroe.wi.us/home/showpublisheddocument/25911/637980687106683523>*
 - For the project, only county and township public roads with perennial flow were assessed.
 - In Monroe County, approximately 90 structures were rated 25+ which indicates suggested replacement.
 - The Southwest area of the county received the worst scores, but it also has the most water running through the area.
 - J. Tessman noted that many culverts in the town of Portland have been replaced over the last few years, which indicates the units may be incorrectly sized for the amount of water flowing in those specific areas which causes them to need replacement.

4. Next meeting – November 2nd, 9-11am

5. Meeting Adjourned - 11:04 a.m.

Recorded by Jennifer Diamond, LCD Administrative Assistant

Monroe County Climate Change Task Force Meeting

Date: 9/7/2022

Monroe County Climate Change Task Force Members

Name	Title	Agency
Tina Osterberg	County Administrator	Monroe County
Bob Micheel	County Conservationist	Monroe County
Alison Elliott	Zoning Administrator	Monroe County
Roxie Anderson	Land Use Planner	Monroe County
David Ohnstad	Highway Commissioner	Monroe County
Jared Tessman	Emergency Management Coordinator	Monroe County
Cedric Schnitzler	County Supervisor, District 4	Monroe County
Wally Habegger	County Supervisor, District 5	Monroe County
Al McCoy	County Supervisor, District 1	Monroe County
Dave Pierce	County Supervisor, District 2	Monroe County
Jack Herricks	Town Chair / MC Farm Bureau President	Town of Jefferson
John Noble	Fisheries Biologist	Fort McCoy
Tonya Townsell	Public Affairs Officer	Fort McCoy
Cindy Koperski	Program and Policy Analyst	WI Dept. of Natural Resources
RED = Absent		

Additional Attendees

Name	Title	Agency
Abbey Nicewander	Senior Planner	MRRPC
Bobbi Jo Fischer	Environmental Analysis Supervisor	WI Dept. of Natural Resources
Clint Gilman	Forester	WI Dept. of Natural Resources
Gillian Pomplun	Reporter	Crawford City Independent
Gregg Wavrunek	Regional Representative	U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin
Helena Wehrs	Land Conservation Dept. Intern	Monroe County
Jennifer Diamond	LCD Administrative Assistant	Monroe County
Joey Esterline	County Supervisor, District 15	Monroe County
Kevin Luepke	Natural Resource Specialist	Fort McCoy
Leah Peterson	Representative	State Representative Loren Oldenburg
Matt Hanewell	Director	La Crosse County LCD
Nikki Krause	Conservationist	Natural Resources Conservation Service
Tucker Gretebeck	Resident	Monroe County